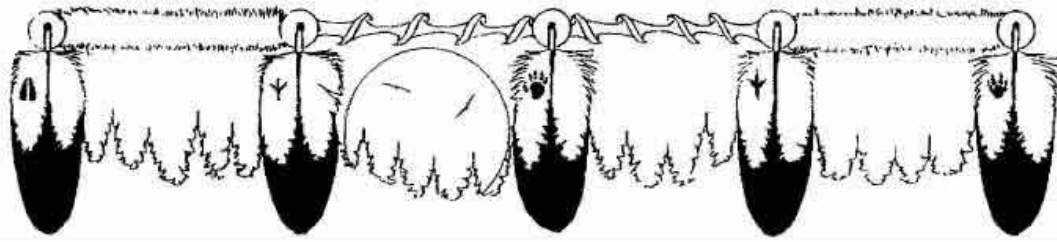


Menominee Nation News



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MIHS students learn lessons for a healthy lifestyle

By Liona Tucker-May
Menominee Nation News

Culture, hope, heartbreak, spirituality... these are some of the topics students at Menominee Indian High School learned about on



Tiger

Wednesday, February 21st. The Menominee Tribal Clinic held their 3rd annual Wellness Day Fair at the high school, leaving a deep impression on

students about the way they live their lives.

Two world renowned speakers, Lisa Tiger and Billy Rogers, were honored to share their knowledge and life experiences with our Menominee youth.

Tiger, a 36 year old Cree-Seminole Native from Muskogee, Oklahoma, shared her hardship, pain, and knowledge she gained along the way about living her life

See **LIFESTYLE** page 4

Menominee Co. receives financial boost from state



Y. Kaquatosh/MNN

Menominee County officials stand before highway equipment and patrol cars that were purchased with a Management Assistance Grant provided by the state. Pictured are, left to right: Ron Corn—Menominee County Administrative Coordinator, Mark Gruentzel—Highway Operator, Ben Warrington—Highway Commissioner, and Don Parduhn, Menominee County Board Member.

By Yvonne Kaquatosh
Menominee Nation News

A Management Assistance Grant through the state in the amount of \$500,000.00 provided a much needed boost for Menominee County.

Four major purchases that were

made with the allocation that was approved by the State Joint Finance Committee included: two brand new dump trucks, 1 single axle and 1 tandem, for the Highway Dept. and two fully equipped squad cars for the Sheriff's Dept. - a 2001 Chevy Impala and a 2001 Ford Crown Victoria.

The brand new dump trucks, will replace old plows, estimated to be at least 15 years old, that will be used as back up.

There was a lot of down time and a lot of break downs with the old plows. The 2001 trucks are

See **ASSISTANCE** page 2

DWD says most agencies meeting performance standards

Menominee Co. among three agencies that failed to meet standards

Special to MNN
by Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) - Three agencies that administer welfare reform programs for the state will have to compete for new contracts after their current deals expire at the end of 2001 because they failed to meet performance standards, officials said Friday.

The remaining 69 Wisconsin Works agencies that met the six performance standards set out by the state will have their contracts automatically renewed for 2002.

The Bad River Indian tribe,

Bayfield County Human Services and Menominee County Human Services met only four of the six standards, Department of Workforce Development spokeswoman Rachel Buttner said.

Agencies that handle the state's welfare-to-work caseload under two-year contracts that expire at the end of 2001 are required to track how many of their clients get jobs and what those people are being paid.

The results of that tracking found that since January 2000:

- 51 percent of people served by the average agency had jobs, DWD requires that at least 35 percent of the people served by the agency have jobs.

See **WISCONSIN WORKS** page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

3 Health

4-7 Education

10 Happy Ads

11 Vital Stats

8-9, 12-16 Community

17-19 Minutes

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ASSISTANCE

equipped with patrol wings which will allow for more snow to be plowed at one time.

As a result, plowing has been cut down by 40%. 'The time saved allows the driver to get to different routes to assist other drivers,' explained Ben Warrington, Menominee Co. Highway Commissioner.

'These two trucks have really helped us this winter with the snow and ice conditions we have experienced,' added Warrington.

Another improvement at the Highway Department that was acquired with the funding is a fully automated (keyed) gasoline system. It is equipped with an automatic billing system for a variety of accounts that have been established with the Co. Highway Dept. including numerous tribal programs. It allows for 24 hour fueling - provided you have an account set up to access the system. It is also equipped to track routine maintenance of the Co. trucks such as, when an oil change is due.

The Co. Highway department has a staff of 13.

County Board Chairman Randy Reiter and Rick Stadelman Executive Director of the Wisconsin Towns Association were also instrumental in securing the funding said County Administrative Coordinator Ron Corn.

'We got more than we expected,' added Corn.

Operations at the Menominee County Courthouse have also been upgraded with the purchase of Public Administration Software that was needed for standard Financial Management, Payroll, Property Tax and Project/Grant Accounting. The cost for the upgrade was \$86,200.00.

Altogether the Menominee Co. Sheriff's Department has eight squads. The Co. Board is already looking at replacing two more squads next year, said board member Don Parduhn.

'It's in the budget and it's guaranteed to a certain extent,' added Parduhn. The Menominee County Sheriff's Department currently employs 7 full-time officers, 3-4 part-time staff, the sheriff and under sheriff. Menominee County caught the attention of the state after a Legislative Audit Bureau Report came out in 1998 that identified the needs of the County. The County will be eligible for the \$500,000.00 allocation every year for the next five years. 'It's been a long time coming,' added Corn.

The Administrative Coordinator wanted to also recognize members of the Joint Finance Committee for their support - Rep. John Gard and Sen. Brian Burke, as well as State Representatives Lorraine Serrati and Senator Roger Breske who were also instrumental in securing the monies for Menominee County.

LIFESTYLE

positively with HIV.

In introducing her, Mark Caskey, Wellness Director at MTC, informed students that 10 Menominees have died from AIDS, and that cases of the sexually transmitted disease, Chlymidia, have doubled. 'Listen to her message of awareness and hope,' Caskey advised the small groups of students that watched from the gymnasiums bleachers.

Tiger, who tested positive for HIV back in 1992, shared some of her teenage upbringing and personal tragedies she endured with the students, as they intently listened to her words.

'In 1992 I knew a little about HIV, but I didn't think it was in our small town Muskogee,' she started out, 'I thought it was only in big cities.' She went on to say that she believes she contracted the deadly disease back in 1988, from her boyfriend Ronnie, whom she dated for about 3 years. 'I didn't know I had this virus for four years.' It was then that her best friend, who is gay, confessed to her that he had a relationship with her boyfriend while they were dating. Putting two and two together, she thought she should be tested.

'I didn't expect it to come back positive,' she stated, the shock and hopelessness expressed in her words. Tiger mentioned that when she was still dating her ex-boyfriend, she put a lot of emotion and work trying to make their relationship work. 'All I got out of it from him was HIV,' she said. Luckily her best friend had not been infected, 'He said he's a pitcher, not a receiver,' she said with a smile.

Tiger has endured a lot of pain early on in her life. In 1967, at the tender age of 2, her father Gerome, a well known Native American artist, shot and killed himself. He was only 26. She stated that his death was alcohol related.

'My dad's death shaped me into who I am today. I was very thankful growing up,' said Tiger. 'I was happy in school, I was popular, and very involved in physical activities,' she added. She took a liking to arm wrestling, and beating out all the guys in her school, including her future boyfriend. She became the Arm Wrestling Champion in 3 states. 'I grew up a fighter. I wasn't a bully, but I liked to fight.' She said, 'Nobody would mess with me, cause if they would, I would fight them and that would be that.'

In May of 1990, she was told her younger brother Chris had been shot and killed. She had to go to the hospital to identify his body. 'I thought he had blood coming down his face, but it was gun powder. Someone he did not even know put a gun to his forehead and killed him,' she said.

During her time of dealing with his tragic death, she broke up with her boyfriend and soon after that learned of her contracting HIV. 'He knew he had HIV and didn't tell anyone - me or my best friend,' Tiger said.

A few years after finding out she had the virus, she started getting symptoms that made her weak and restless. Finally, a few years later the doctors told her she also had Parkinson's Disease. Tiger said she thought, what next?

Looking at Tiger, you would never think she has HIV. Her long dark hair sways over her back as she smiles at the audience. Her eyes glow and her spirit brightens the room. Although her life has been filled with heartache and pain, she continues to stay strong and keeps going forward. She is a brave woman and an inspiration to Native Americans for speaking about her disease. Choosing to acknowledge her mistakes and learn from them, she spreads her word to make sure as many of our Native youth take caution and protect themselves before they give in to the pressures of sex. After her speech she shook as many students hands as she could, saying she wants to shake the hands of as many Native Americans she can while out speaking. 'There are angels among us . . . and she is one of them,' Caskey said while giving her some gifts and then gave her a big hug.

A true hero for a very important cause, Tiger is and always will be a fighter. If it can happen to her, it can happen to you.

Billy Rogers, a Kiowa Native from Oklahoma, started his own organization in 2000 called the Native Wellness and Healing Institute, where he has successfully initiated the native wellness movement that has effectively helped thousands of Native Americans.

'Rogers brings out a divine wellness whenever he speaks,' said Caskey while introducing him to the students. He is hailed as an inspiration to all Native people, and helps them to bring an inner wellness within themselves. Rogers says the Creator has given him a special talent, informing that he seems to be blessed with the gift of connecting well with young people in a good way, it's a gift that he is very proud to have.

Rogers kept students alert by physically involving them during his speech, having them stand when certain topics pertained to them or their lives. Laughing while learning, his audience was captivated by what he had to say and teach them about being proud to be Native American. He promised them that they would learn something to help them later in life, 'Take these concepts and ideals and use them in your own lives,' said Rogers, 'Being proud to be Native will make you a stronger person.'

The students were taught some of our Native sign language by Rogers, who made the experience for students one that they enjoyed. He then asked them to sign different sayings to their friends sitting next to them, which caused many hilarious reactions as students and staff giggled at each other.

Rogers informed the audience that there are four directions to wellness: spiritual, physical, mental and emotional. This was the start of students moving up and down out of their seats, to show if any of his examples pertained to them.

Advising them to walk the four directions of life everyday, Rogers explained to them that this was

the traditional model of looking at life, that our ancestors used this method throughout their lives.

Rogers then turned the audiences attention to a small display he had set up on the stage. He had placed several pictures of animals, explaining that animals characteristics match individual characteristics, and they were to listen as he described each one and determine which animal instincts and traits each of them possessed.

'Use these animals spirits, characteristics and visions . . . they will guide you in a way to make your behavior one in which your ancestors will be proud,' said Rogers, 'What you put out there will come back to you. Positive or negative. Our lives are shaped in the form of a circle, it continually comes around.'

The concept that Rogers uses during his speech keeps his audience captivated. He incorporates physical participation to teach important lessons of better ways to live life. His strategic plan is well thought out and brings forth a new way of keeping Native youth abreast of our culture and spiritual well being. I would recommend all Native Americans to take the opportunity to listen in on one of his speeches at any chance you may have. It will make you think about different ways to live your life to the fullest, while giving back to your ancestors and your culture.

In closing, the students and staff at Menominee Indian High School were provided important and enlightening information from these two wonderful Native American speakers. Giving the audience a more broader concept of obstacles in our lives and how to overcome them. Spirituality, pride and self-respect of our Native beliefs will make each individual stronger and more prepared for what life has in store for each of us.

For more information on either Tiger or Rogers you can contact Mark Caskey at the Tribal Clinic at 799-3361.

WISCONSIN

* The average wage among all agencies was 17 percent higher than what was required. People served by the agency are required to make at least the same salary that they did in 1998.

*86 percent of the people served by the average agency who got jobs kept them for at least a month - higher than the state requirement of 75 percent.

All five Milwaukee W-2 agencies met or exceeded standards.

The Bad River Tribe had the lowest performance of the three that won't have their contracts renewed, with 57 percent of their clients engaged in the required employment or training activities.

Forty-six percent of those without a high school education participated in educational activities, while the state requires 80 percent for both categories.

'It doesn't mean that they necessarily won't be able to get the next contract; they just have to

compete for it,' Biittner said.

On the Net:

Department of Workforce Development: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us>